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# EDITORIALS.

Guatemala

# C.I.A. Death Squad

The U.S. government has systematic links to Guatemalan Army death squad operations that go far beyond the disclosures that have recently shaken official Washington. The news that the C.I.A. employed a Guatemalan colonel who reportedly ordered two murders has been greeted with professions of shock and outrage. But in fact the story goes much deeper, as U.S. officials well know.

North American C.I.A. operatives work inside a Guatemalan Army unit that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. The G-2, headquartered on the fourth floor of the Guatemalan National Palace, has, since at least the 1960s, been advised, trained, armed and equipped by U.S. undercover agents. Working out of the U.S. Embassy and living in safehouses and hotels, these agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by the C.I.A. and who have been implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations.

This secret G-2/C.I.A. collaboration has been described by Guatemalan and U.S. operatives and confirmed, in various aspects, by three former Guatemalan heads of state. These accounts also mesh with that given in a March 28 interview by Col. Julio Roberto Alpírez, the C.I.A.-paid Guatemalan G-2 officer who has been implicated in the murders of Guatemalan guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca Velásquez and a U.S. citizen, Michael DeVine.

One of the American agents who works with the G-2, a thin blond man in his 40s who goes by the name of Randy Capister, has been involved in similar operations with the army of

neighboring El Salvador. Another, a weapons expert known as Joe Jacarino, has operated throughout the Caribbean, and has accompanied G-2 units on missions into rural zones.

Jacarino's presence in the embassy was confirmed by David Wright, a former embassy intelligence employee who called Jacarino a "military liaison." Col. George Hooker, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency chief in Guatemala from 1985 to 1989, says he also knew Jacarino, though he says Jacarino was not with the D.I.A. When asked whether Jacarino was with the C.I.A. he replied, "I'm not at liberty to say."

Celerino Castillo, a former agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration who dealt with the G-2 and the C.I.A. in Guatemala, says he worked with Capister as well as with Jacarino. He showed photographs of himself and Capister at embassy events and in the field. Guatemalan sources say Capister meets regularly with Guatemalan Army chiefs. He has been seen in meetings in Guatemala City as recently as the spring of 1994.

When I reached Colonel Alpírez at the La Aurora base in Guatemala, he denied all involvement in the deaths of Bámaca and DeVine and said he was never paid by the C.I.A. But he discussed at length how the agency advises and helps run the G-2. He praised the C.I.A. for "professionalism" and close rapport with Guatemalan officers. He said that agency operatives often come to Guatemala on temporary duty, during which they train G-2 men and provide "advice and technical assistance." He described attending C.I.A. sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage the factors of power" to "fortify democracy." He said the C.I.A. men were on call to respond to G-2 questions, and that the G-2 often consulted the agency on how to deal with "political problems." Alpírez said he was not authorized to give specifics on the technical assistance, nor would he name the North Americans the G-2 worked with, though he said they were "very good friends."

Other officials, though, say that at least during the mid-1980s G-2 officers were paid by Jack McCavitt, then C.I.A. station chief, and that the "technical assistance" includes communications gear, computers and special firearms, as well as collaborative use of C.I.A.-owned helicopters that are flown out of the Piper hangar at the La Aurora civilian airport and from a separate U.S. air facility.

Through what Amnesty International has called "a government program of political murder," the Guatemalan Army has, since 1978, killed more than 110,000 civilians. The G-2 and a smaller, affiliated unit called the Archivo have long been openly known in Guatemala as the brain of the terror state. With a contingent of more than 2,000 agents and with subunits in the local army bases, the G-2—under orders of the army high command—coordinates the torture, assassination and disappearance of dissidents.

"If the G-2 wants to kill you, they kill you," former army Chief of Staff Gen. Benedicto Lucas García once said. "They send one of their trucks with a hit squad and that's it." Current and former G-2 agents describe a program of surveillance backed by a web of torture centers and clandestine body dumps. In 1986, then-army Chief of Staff Gen. Héctor Gramajo Morales, a U.S. protégé, said that the G-2 maintains files on and watches "anyone who is an opponent of the Guatemalan state in any realm." A former G-2 agent says that the base he worked at in Huehuetenango maintained its own crematorium and "processed" abductees by chopping off limbs, singeing flesh and administering electric shocks.

At least three of the recent G-2 chiefs have been paid by the C.I.A., according to U.S. and Guatemalan intelligence sources. One of them, Gen. Edgar Godoy Gaitán, a former army Chief of Staff, has been accused in court by the victim's family of being one of the prime "intellectual authors" of the 1990 murder of the noted Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack Chang [see Victor Perera, "Where Is Justice in Guatemala?" May 24, 1993]. Another, Col. Otto Perez Molina, who now runs the Presidential General Staff and oversees the Archivo, was in charge in 1994, when, according to the Archbishop's human rights office, there was evidence of General Staff involvement in the assassination of Judge Edgar Ramiro Elías Ogaldez. The third, Gen. Francisco Ortega Menaldo, who now works in Washington as general staff director at the Pentagon-backed Inter-American Defense Board, was G-2 chief in the late 1980s during a series of assassinations of students, peasants and human rights activists. Reached at his home in Florida, Jack McCavitt said he does not talk to journalists. When asked whether Ortega Menaldo was on the C.I.A. payroll, he shouted "Enough!" and slammed down the phone.

## STRONGMAN ON CAMPUS

Credit Democratic Representative Robert Torricelli for disclosing the latest C.I.A. horror story: An American hotelier and a Guatemalan rebel leader married to an American were executed on the orders of a paid asset of the agency. Yet in his letter to the White House decrying the C.I.A., Torricelli overlooked a key aspect of the episode—the murderous colonel, Julio Roberto Alpírez, was twice a student at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. There is good reason for the Congressman to be forgetful on this point. In September 1993, when Representative Joseph Kennedy 2d proposed an amendment to defund the S.O.A., Torricelli, then chairman of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee, was a prime opponent of the measure. Kennedy argued that the school too often had trained thugs, including the head of an Argentine junta, an organizer of Salvadoran death squads and Manuel Noriega. But Torricelli hailed the institution and actually proferred a Guatemalan officer as a good example: This prominent alumnus of the school had declined to join a coup in Guatemala earlier in the year. Torricelli did not mention that the three officers most identified with that coup had also prepped at the School of the Americas. Consider this, Congressman: Six months after Alpírez finished his second stint at the school—which included several hours of training in human rights—this C.I.A. and S.O.A. man in Guatemala reportedly had an American killed.

DAVID CORN

These crimes are merely examples of a vast, systematic pattern; likewise, these men are only cogs in a large U.S. government apparatus. Colonel Hooker, the former D.I.A. chief for Guatemala, says, "It would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in the Guatemalan Army who ever collected a C.I.A. paycheck." Hooker says the agency payroll is so large that it encompasses most of the army's top decision-makers. When I told him that his friend, Gen. Mario Enríquez Morales, the current Defense Minister, had reacted to the Alpírez scandal by saying publicly that it was "disloyal" and "shameful" for officers to take C.I.A. money, Hooker burst out laughing and exclaimed: "Good! Good answer, Mario! I'd hate to think how many guys were on that payroll. It's a perfectly normal thing."

Other top commanders paid by the C.I.A. include Gen. Roberto Matta Galvez, former army Chief of Staff, head of the Presidential General Staff and commander of massacres in the El Quiché department; and General Gramajo, Defense Minister during the armed forces' abduction, rape and torture of Dianna Ortiz, an American nun. (Sister Ortiz has testified that a man she believes to be North American seemed to be the supervisor of the agents who abducted her. Gramajo said she had sustained her 111 burn wounds during a "lesbian love tryst.") Gramajo also managed the early 1980s highland massacres. Colonel Hooker says he once brought Gramajo on a ten-day tour of the United States to speak at U.S. military bases and confer with the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Three recent Guatemalan heads of state confirm that the C.I.A. works closely with the G-2. Last year, when I asked Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores (military dictator from 1983 to 1986) how the country's death squads had originated, he said they had been started "in the 1960s by the C.I.A." Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt (dictator from 1982 to 1983 and the current Congress President), who ordered the main highland massacres (662 villages destroyed, by the army's own count), said the C.I.A. did have agents inside the G-2. When I asked Ríos Montt—a firm believer in the death penalty—if he thought *he* should be executed for his role in the slaughter, he leapt to his feet and shouted "Yes! Try me! Put me against the wall!" but he said he should be tried only if Americans were tried too. Specifically, he cited President Reagan, who, in the midst of the massacres, embraced Ríos Montt and said he was getting "a bum rap" on human rights. Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo, civilian President from 1986 to 1991 (under whom the rate of killing actually *increased*), said "the C.I.A. often contracts with our military and G-2 people," and that from what he knew they "very probably" had people inside "who have participated with our G-2 in technical assistance and advice."

These C.I.A. operations are, of course, part of the larger U.S. policy. The Bush and Clinton State Departments, for example, in the midst of a much-touted "cutoff" of military aid to Guatemala after 1990, authorized—according to classified State Department records—more than 114 separate sales of U.S. pistols and rifles.

The killing of defenseless people has been state policy in Guatemala for thirty years. The question is not whether the U.S. government has known—it is obviously aware of its own actions. It is why, with overt and covert aid, it has helped commit the army's murders.

ALLAN NAIRN

*Allan Nairn has written extensively on Guatemala and its military since 1980. Last fall in* The Nation *he broke the story of U.S. intelligence collaboration with Haiti's FRAPH.*

# Silent Racism

In February student activists at Rutgers University gave America their own version of a comparative history lesson: Racism Then and Now. In protesting a racist statement by university president Francis Lawrence, the United Students Coalition at Rutgers brought the difficulties of civil rights activism in the 1990s to the national stage. Rutgers students were seriously lacking in iconography: They had no visual representation of their oppression—no fire hoses, police dogs or billy clubs—for the front pages and nightly news. The Rutgers coalition had only Lawrence's inflammatory words—he called African-Americans a disadvantaged population because of their genetic and hereditary background. Since institutional racism is not easily photographed, the difficulty for activists whose causes are race-based becomes how to combat the "misspoken" word.

Otis Rolley, one of the heads of the student coalition's public relations committee, used the images of protests past to guide the coalition, although he was fully aware that times have changed. Before embarking on the campaign against Lawrence, Rolley and other students referred to Richard McCormick's *The Black Student Protest Movement at Rutgers*, an account of campus activism a generation ago. The students' knowledge of this history and their understanding of past tactics helped them turn what could have been a passing murmur into a full-scale movement. But the comparison revealed the differences between the activism of yesterday and today. "Back then there was such blatant racism: 'You're black and I don't want you at school,' " Rolley reflects. "Now everything is so much more covert that when you cry out, people say, 'What are you talking about? It's a great school, kid.' "

But at universities like Rutgers, young people of color continue to face shrouded but significant racism—the suspicious glance, the continual requests for identification not made of white students, the assumptions of favoritism due to quotas. Only rarely do words surface as a blunt reminder that the playing field is still slanted. Around the Rutgers campus, Rolley says, "some people yell 'nigga' from a car but they don't stick around. The attacks are always cowardly."

As cowardly, perhaps, as Lawrence's attempts to hide behind his "good" record on race relations. In the 1980s Rutgers failed to meet the most basic affirmative action goals for the enrollment of minority students. In response, the Rutgers Board of Governors created a Minority Community Leaders Advisory Board. Lawrence disbanded the board as soon as minimum minority enrollment levels were met. And despite the media's focus on Lawrence, the students' demands go far beyond removing him as president—to nothing less than a demand for full equal opportunity, including minority tenure

appointments and student representation on the university's Board of Governors. Coalition member Naima Nguvu complains that "the media have turned this into only a black/white thing. The real issues at stake have to do with funding *all* different kinds of students at the university, and with giving *all* students a greater voice. But race sells newspapers."

Lawrence's removal provides an issue around which the students can rally to reinvent an activism of nuance. "We are the babies of the baby boomers," says Dion Lewis, assistant to the director of the university's Paul Robeson Cultural Center. "We don't have any recollection of turning on the radio or TV and hearing [about the civil rights movement]. We have no firsthand accounts, so we have to make our own interpretations." Lawrence's slurs may pale compared with Ku Klux Klan midnight rides, but the point to these students is that such extremes should no longer be necessary to garner support for a movement opposing racism. VALERIE BURGHER

*Valerie Burgher is a New York–based freelance writer.*

CLINTON & CO.

# Calls of the Wild

Welcome to the jungle. During the House welfare debate, Representative John Mica, a Republican from Florida, compared welfare recipients to alligators who lose their survival instincts if they receive "unnatural feeding" from do-good humans. (Mica knows reptiles; he has been both a real estate developer and a lobbyist for chemical and financial interests.) Other social Darwinists in his party rushed forward. Representative Barbara Cubin, a Wyoming Republican, equated welfare recipients to the wolves being reintroduced into the West. The animals will not leave the pens where they are fed and pampered by federal bureaucrats. Hunger is good.

On a largely partisan vote, the Republican bill—which ends the welfare entitlement, bans welfare payments to certain recipients, imposes a time limit on benefits, cuts the school nutrition program and reorganizes several anti-poverty programs into block grants to be tossed to the states—won after four days of rowdy debate. House Democrats mounted a valiant effort. But their arguments relied on compassion for the indigent and largely avoided critiques of an economic system that relies on unemployment. (Welfare-bashers scream about forcing people into jobs; the Federal Reserve boosts interest rates when employment rises. How's that for punishing work?) Representative Sam Gibbons, the 75-year-old ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee, was a feisty champion on the losing side. When Republicans opposed a Democratic request for a few extra minutes of debate, he dryly told one: "You can get out of here for your golf game." After Mica did his gator stomp, Gibbons exclaimed, "In all my thirty-four years here I thought I had heard it all, but we have a millionaire from Florida comparing children to alligators."

Yet there was little of substance the Democrats could do. A move to force the Republicans to earmark the $66 billion in welfare cuts for deficit reduction, not tax cuts, faltered. A liberal alternative introduced by Representative Patsy Mink—more funds for education, job search assistance, child care—garnered only ninety-six votes. A substitute package offered by conservative Democrats (its prime advantage over the G.O.P. measure was that it maintained welfare as an entitlement) lost 228 to 205.

Now the Senate will turn to welfare reform. There, fewer Republican hound dogs have chased after welfare moms, but senators are taking lessons from their House colleagues. Bob Packwood, who chairs the Finance Committee, fancies the notion of transforming the existing entitlement-based program into a system of block grants to the states. But Packwood claims he wants a bipartisan package, and for that he will need the assistance of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the senior Democrat on the committee and the granddaddy of welfare reform. Moynihan has blasted the House measure for ending the entitlement status of welfare. While sliding toward accepting the House version, Packwood and other Republicans remain gun-shy about severe restrictions on benefits and about booting school nutrition programs to the states. Expect them to revive an old G.O.P. theme: Their welfare reform is kinder and gentler.

As for the President, before the debate began he called the Republican bill "too weak on moving people from welfare to work, not as tough as it should be on deadbeat parents, and too tough on innocent children." Then, after the vote, he said "we saw some progress" in the House's deliberations and praised an amendment compelling tougher enforcement of child-support laws. Although he criticized Republicans for paring child care benefits and commended Democrats for their opposition, Clinton kept a positive disposition. Rather than assail the "natural order" Republicans, the President urged a more polite debate. The next day, White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta vowed Clinton would veto any welfare bill that tears apart the safety net for children. The President likely has not decided where, if anywhere, to make his stand. More prescient may be the private remark of a White House official who said with regret, "It is inconceivable that Clinton will veto a bill labeled welfare reform." DAVID CORN

★

## THE BIGS

*The pitcher's semi-pro—with admirable nerve,*
*With Walter Mitty dreams, without a breaking curve.*
*The catcher cannot catch. He also cannot throw.*
*Why call this major league? The owners say it's so.*

*The opera season starts. The principal they hire,*
*A bass assigned no solos in his church's choir,*
*Sings flat as the soprano in a grim duet.*
*If owners say it's so, will that still be the Met?*

*Calvin Trillin*

# EXCHANGE.

## 'NO SHRED OF TRUTH'

*Casper, Wyo.*

I served as Ambassador to Guatemala from October 1989 through November 1992. Throughout that period, our embassy was known for its efforts to protect human rights and condemn abuses. There is an extensive record in the Guatemalan and American media on our statements and actions. In view of this record, I was stunned to read Allan Nairn's April 24 editorial, "Murder as Policy." It gives a false picture of my actions and the actions of the embassy. The second paragraph, which accuses me of covering up and "facilitat[ing] American support for a killer army" and states that I was an "on-the-scene supervisor" of such an effort, is a lie. There is no shred of truth in it. As a principal opponent of human rights abuses in Guatemala, I did not cover up such abuses: I exposed them whenever possible.

My speech to the Guatemalan Rotary Club in February 1991, which stated: "It is impossible for the United States to maintain strong, stable and enduring relations with governments which violate or fail effectively to protect human rights" caused President Vinicio Cerezo to react so badly that I was recalled for one week of "consultations." I returned with a personal letter from President Bush to Mr. Cerezo, which said: "I know that Ambassador Stroock has, on a number of occasions, expressed my administration's concern over human rights abuses and the need for justice. He has done so with my full support." One year later, after the election of President Jorge Serrano, I was threatened with being declared persona non grata for our refusal to restore $13 million in nonlethal military aid cut off during the Cerezo Administration because of human rights violations.

Our opposition to human rights abuses was not confined to statements. When an American member of the Peace Brigade, Meredith Larson, was stabbed, we demanded and received from the Chief of Police and the Interior Minister security protection for her and that organization. When Bruce Harris, director of Casas Alianza, the home for Guatemalan street children, reported the death by torture of three of his charges, we made his case the embassy's cause. When anthropologist Myrna Mack was murdered, I attended the funeral services, had embassy officers call at the Mack home and had our security officers investigate. We invited Myrna's sister, Helen, who was actively pursuing the murder, to our residence to show our support, visited the Mack home on two occasions when death threats were reported and brought the matter up once a month with the President, the Police Chief, the Defense Minister and the Human Rights Ombudsman.

When Michael DeVine was murdered by a squad of soldiers, our embassy recommended that the United States cut off all further direct aid to the Guatemalan Army, valued at more than $13 million. We worked closely with Michael's widow, Carole DeVine, and made the resolution of this case a centerpiece of our diplomatic efforts. We held weekly staff meetings devoted to resolving this crime. If, as charged, a Guatemalan colonel involved in the cover-up of this crime was a paid C.I.A. agent, it was not known to me or my staff. Mrs. DeVine has publicly spoken, on several occasions, of her appreciation for the help and support she received from the embassy during the entire ordeal. I cannot comment on the tragedy of Jennifer Harbury and her husband because that sad situation came to light after my time in office, but the above is only a small, partial listing of our human rights efforts.

The editorial contains additional falsehoods. It is a lie that I had access to the C.I.A.'s list of Guatemalan agents or "assets." These were kept under tight secrecy and were not made available to me, nor, as I understand it, were they made available to the Congressional Oversight Committees. It is also a lie that, during my time at post, there were any U.S. personnel training the Guatemalan Army commandos—the "Kaibiles." Instead, we issued explicit instructions not to provide any such training.

It is a lie that, during my time at post, the U.S. government sold weapons to Guatemala. Before my arrival at post, there had been a sale by the Colt factory in Connecticut of 16,000 rifles. This sale, completed early in 1989, was a matter of considerable concern. As a result, any requests for embassy help in negotiating arms contracts between American private businesses and the Guatemalan Army were rejected.

The editorial repeats a slander against a fine Foreign Service officer—Lewis Amselem—claiming he suggested that Sister Dianna Ortiz, an American nun who was kidnapped for twenty-four hours, severely beaten and burned—was involved in homosexual activities. This story has absolutely no basis in fact. Amselem has denied it on every occasion, and no one has come forward to support this nasty and untrue allegation.

Since much of the editorial is concerned with my letter of January 29, 1990, to Paul Soreff, the attorney hired to handle Sister Ortiz's affairs in Guatemala, I attach a copy of the letter itself. The passage that was "selected" for the editorial was one in which I defended our Foreign Service officers from innuendoes that they were involved in the crime. That staff was working overtime to try and solve the Ortiz case. This was an unsupportable slur cast on people who did not and do not deserve it.

Regarding Sister Dianna Ortiz, I personally saw her on two occasions within forty-eight hours of her abduction. I offered her the security of my residence and the services of my doctor. I telephoned her father about her condition and called on the Defense Minister to secure permission for Sister Dianna to leave the country without having to appear before a Guatemalan court concerning her allegations. The embassy followed up throughout the Ortiz investigation on a weekly basis. When she returned to Guatemala, more than a year after the crime, she lived in my home as our guest. We arranged for around-the-clock security, cars, drivers and legal advisers from the embassy.

Protection of human rights was only one of the goals of the U.S. Mission to Guatemala. Equally important were the protection and development of democracy, the promotion of trade and the interdiction of drugs. To protect democracy, we had to work with the Guatemalan Military Intelligence to be forewarned of coup attempts from both the right and the left. There were three credible attempts made during my term in office.

Our contacts with the military intelligence services were also essential in the war on drugs. Guatemala grows poppies that are processed into heroin and shipped to the United States. It is also a major transshipment point for cocaine from South America. We ran a major drug interdiction effort in Guatemala, specifically authorized by Congress and the Drug Enforcement Administration. To be effective we had to use local intelligence services, and they provided us with many valuable leads. In three years we captured almost 100 tons of cocaine, sprayed thousands of acres of poppy plants, extradited five drug traffickers to the United States, had three narcotraffickers expelled as "undesirable aliens" and denied several visas to visit the United States to persons known to be involved in this dirty business, specifically including two Guatemalan Army colonels.

Cooperation with the Guatemalan Army and police—the only agencies in the country capable of this work—by the embassy, the D.E.A. and the C.I.A., was *not* secret. Our cooperation with the military and the police in these matters was specifically discussed with every visiting Congressional delegation that came to Guatemala while I was there, both before and after the military aid cutoff. The U.S. President issued the necessary orders, the U.S. Congress appropriated the required funds, and the U.S. Mission to Guatemala did its best to carry out its mandates. We faced a major dilemma: Frequently we would be protesting about human rights abuses to the very same people whose help was required to protect democracy and interdict drugs. Solving that inherent conflict requires careful consideration and calm judgment. It requires exchange of ideas and cooperation between people of good will who may have differing points of view. Your editorial does little to advance reasonable discussions on how best to resolve that conflict in a beautiful, but severely troubled, neighboring country.

*Thomas F. Stroock*

## NAIRN REPLIES

*New York City*

Stroock's embassy repeatedly boasted in background press briefings that, as *The New York Times* (July 5, 1990) put it, Washington

(*Continued on Page 772*)

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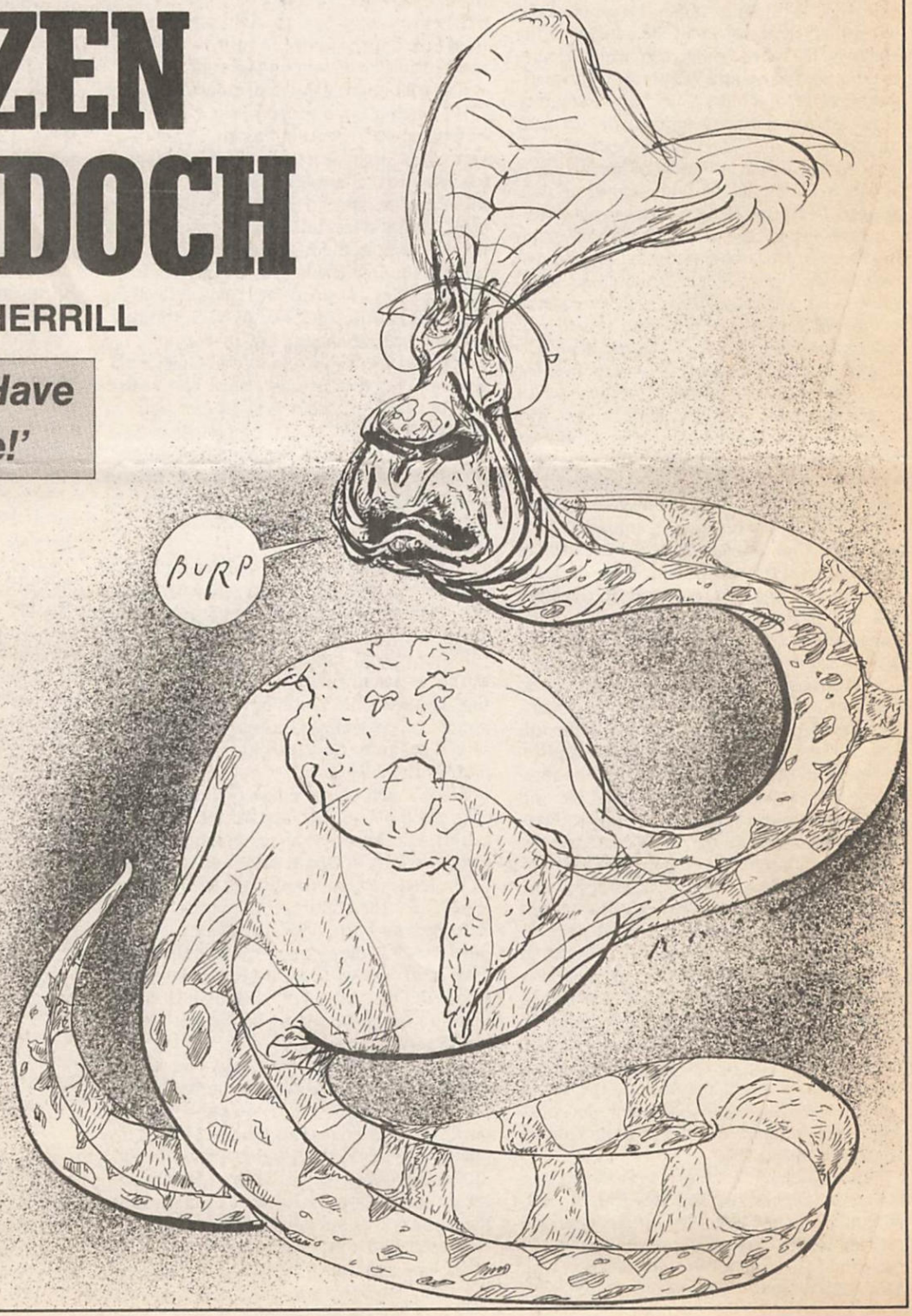
# CITIZEN MURDOCH

BY ROBERT SHERRILL

*F.C.C. says, 'Have a g'day, Rupe!'*





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Crossroads"), which upped the ante. The song, naturally, was banned. Translated, part of the lyrics run, "If you're an assassin, get out of here/If you're a thief, get out of here," and then warn "you'll be in deep trouble at the crossroads." The implications, both in voodoo and political terms, were clear to all, including the military junta. Still, as Lolo admits, "The military never attacked us directly, although a colonel told me never to go out at night." And the group continued to tour abroad.

In 1993, Boukman came here for what turned out to be a successful seven-month tour. It was their first experience crisscrossing the vastness of America; they had a van with two diesel fuel-tanks that let them cruise 400 miles without a stop. Now, for most world-music outfits the United States is a spotty and jerry-built market staffed more by well-intentioned amateurs than pros, which produces some long stretches between venues on tour. For Boukman, that led to a wondrous encounter with Middle America in Ludington, Michigan, where manager Dan Behrman drove the eleven-strong troupe from Ann Arbor's Frog Island Festival for a layover.

Let Behrman tell the tale: "My wife had set up the tour, and we pulled into this Ramada Inn. Being the white guy, I went in first and paid for the rooms in cash—$1,100 for five nights, four rooms, twelve people. Don't ask; that's how we did it—still do it. I say to the clerk, 'Do you have a lounge with a band?' He says yes, but there's no one there this week. I say, 'Can I speak with the manager?' He comes out—very nice guy—I give him a tape (we're always selling CDs and tapes on the road) and a lot of clips from Haitian newspapers (I didn't have much American press yet), and he loves what he sees and hears. So he says, 'I'll give you six rooms and meals and a public address system if you do three nights, two sets a night.' Voilà, we have a place to rehearse. I get the $1,100 back and give it to Mimerose. A writer shows up from the local paper the first night, which is pretty crowded, and does a story. The next night the place is jammed. The police chief is wearing a Boukman T-shirt over his uniform, with his badge pinned to it. The motel manager gives us the key to the kitchen and the game room and the pool, so we can use them whenever we want."

In 1994 Boukman left Haiti again—though their send-off was less than auspicious. For their last Port-au-Prince concert, tear gas filled the air when the band launched into the banned "Kalfou Danjere"; Lolo found himself facing an attaché who was pointing a gun at his chest. That June, one member, percussionist-bassist Michel "Oliche" Lynch, died of meningitis, partly because the U.S.-led embargo made medication difficult to get. Finishing up their European tour, the band found itself stranded. Unable to get a flight from England to Haiti, denied U.S. visas because they're Haitian, Boukman went to ground in Jamaica and spent months at Marley's Tuff Gong studios recording *Libète*.

"When I heard *Rastaman Vibration* (Island) years ago, it changed everything for me," Dady told me. You can hear that directly on *Kalfou Danjere*'s opening cut, which echoes Marley's "Redemption Song," combining it with cascading churchy call-and-response vocals and a classic American-rock progression—an aptly syncretic setting for the Dady-penned hymn of divine praise. Where *Kalfou* was rife with Afropop and starkly arranged chants, *Libète* has a physical sound that is startling, dreamy yet precise, resonant with rich depths. More than anything, it recalls Daniel Lanois–produced Neville Brothers albums like *Yellow Moon* and *My Brother's Keeper* (both A&M). "I wasn't thinking about that," Dady insisted, then reminded me, "You know, the Neville Brothers' grandmother was from Haiti, and they did that movie about Haiti with Jonathan Demme." Yes, and New Orleans voodoo comes from the same African origins as Haitian voodoo. The stubborn resurfacing of African culture in the New World ought to lay any doubts to rest: The Africans dragooned into slavery found ways to preserve their varied heritages, and as a result significantly shaped the dominant society. The palimpsest of New World culture guarantees, above all, the regular and fruitful return of the repressed. □

# EVENTS.

## NEW YORK

**WHEN WORKERS DECIDE:** Workplace Democracy Takes Root in North America. A discussion with Dr. Len Krimerman, editor of the Grassroots Economic Organizing Letter. Wednesday, May 24, 7:30 PM. WESPAC, 255 Grove Street, White Plains. $3 contribution requested. For information, call (914) 682-0488.

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# EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 742*)

had "los[t] faith in the civilian Government" and thus "turned to the country's military." The message, as conveyed by the *Los Angeles Times* (May 7, 1990), was that the United States was "disillusioned" with weak, corrupt elected civilians and so had "turn[ed] to Guatemala's military to promote economic and political stability." The civilian presidents, not surprisingly, reacted badly to such pronouncements, and had several run-ins with Stroock.

The U.S. policy was and is the antithesis of democracy. In the name of "stability" its exponents have saddled Guatemala with a mass-murdering army, using the flimsy pretext that if they don't, the admittedly powerless civilian presidents will be ousted in coups! They also argue that the army—itself a prime drug runner—must be maintained to fight drugs.

During Stroock's term alone there were at least 1,591 "extrajudicial executions" in Guatemala. Yet if Strook was telling the truth to the Rotary Club, one must assume that, in Washington's view, the Guatemalan Army "protect[s] human rights." For, despite forty-one years of uninterrupted slaughter (at least 140,000 murdered), Washington has indeed "maintain[ed] strong, stable and enduring relations" with that army. In such circumstances, when the U.S. government postures on specific killings or broad "human rights," its words deserve the same consideration as the plaints

zing style—Haiti's version of Rasta dreadlocks. They sing in Creole, which was officially rejected under the Duvaliers. And until recently they lived in a lakou, the rural Haitian descendant of African villages with their communal square. (The lakou is now a voodoo temple.)

As he was growing up, though, Lolo's rock idols included Hendrix, Santana (who brought Afro-Cuban salsa into rock), Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, P-Funk and radio staples of the time like the Archies' "Sugar Sugar." They all resonate across Boukman's catalogue. And there was disco, whose influence (*pace* the "disco sucks" crowd) spans from India to Africa to the Caribbean, spawning soukous, soca and a host of other genres. As Lolo put it, "The lyrics were stupid, but many of the grooves were great." In fact, the drum machine around which the percussionists in Boukman weave magical polyrhythms often sets a disco beat as the heart pulse. "Jou Nou Revolte" on *Kalfou*, for instance, sounds a lot like Chic with political aphorisms for lyrics.

In contrast to many other Caribbean roots-rockers like Marley, the Beaubruns did not really absorb their overseas music from the radio. Sophisticated urbanites in a land of rural peasants, the kids who would become Boukman grew up with the perks of celebrity. Their father, Theodore Beaubrun Sr., is Haiti's Bill Cosby, a social satirist who was also head of the National Theater. He made bourgeois (for Haiti) money but lost the rights to authorship and royalties that might have made him a member of the elite thanks to the, uh, unique legal structures of his homeland. Beaubrun *père* traveled widely, especially to the United States; Lolo told me how his father brought back James Brown's "Hot Pants" after seeing Mr. Dynamite burn up the Apollo Theater. The youngsters' mother moved to Brooklyn, where they visited her, after she and her husband separated. Daniel "Dady" Beaubrun, the group's music director, lived here for a decade, attending Queens College, returning to Haiti twice a year to play with the band and shuttling demo tapes back and forth as they evolved their voodoo-meets-rock approach, before returning to Haiti for good in 1987. Lolo, Boukman's often cloudily aphoristic voodoo visionary, studied business administration in the United States for two years.

The Beaubruns' status on the outskirts of Haiti's elite afforded them some protection. As Jerry Rappaport, who signed them to Mango Records here in 1990, put it, "The more organized and intelligent members of the military realized that attacking them directly would probably create too much trouble. So they seemed to play a role in keeping the paramilitary elements under some control about the band." Their partial shield would increasingly be deployed as Boukman deviated from the accepted cultural line of the island's governing classes.

In Haiti, that means the Europeanized upper crust, the light-skinned professional elite living behind walled mansions in select districts of Port-au-Prince, with its profound distaste for and fear of the powerful rhythms of voodoo drums. Duvalier tried to appropriate the black-magic aspects of Bizango voodoo to his own ends: As Graham Greene showed in *The Comedians*, the Tonton Macoutes often cloaked themselves in zombielike shadows to enhance fear. But voodoo's stubbornly independent cultural life also represented a threat. Wade Davis described it in his 1985 best seller, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*: "Vodoun is a quintessentially democratic faith. Each believer not only has direct contact with the spirits, he actually receives them into his body. As the Haitians say, the Catholic goes to church to speak about God, the vodounist dances in the hounfour to become God."

In a country as widely illiterate as Haiti (some 80 percent of Haitians can't read or write), music still serves one of its primordial functions—to communicate news and views, to instruct as well as delight. So as Boukman refined its "rasin" (roots music), as it added drum machines and electronic keyboards (a gradual shift, inspired by Dady, that brought flack from official sources and voodoo traditionalists). As the band members fell into trances and were ridden by voodoo loa, or animist spirits, during performances, they risked disfavor and danger, were seen as traitors to their class while non-elite Haitians reveled in their uses of street and voodoo culture. By the late 1980s, Boukman's songs were routinely banned from many radio and TV outlets; even public performances were canceled. Nevertheless, the thriving if illicit cassette-duplicating distribution network in Haiti made the band's music widely available. And Boukman was spared suppression (or worse) thanks to Beaubrun Sr.'s celebrity as well as its own rapidly growing notoriety.

By September 1991, when Aristide was overthrown, Boukman responded by cutting "Kalfou Danjere" ("Dangerous

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of a mafia don professing shock at the blood spilled by his employees.

That is the precise relationship between Washington and the Guatemalan killers. As I detailed in these pages on April 17, most of the top officers are *employees* of the United States. Beyond that there are U.S. operatives in the G-2 death squads, U.S. troops in the countryside, U.S. advice and technical assistance for the G-2 (e.g., special weapons, computers, helicopters), U.S. supply of "surveillance equipment and training" (as Stroock himself admitted in the April 16 *Casper Star Tribune*), U.S. training junkets for top officers. And these are just the lines of support that Stroock *does not* dispute.

He contests two points: licensed arms sales and Kaibil training. The big M-16 sale was interrupted by Congress until October 1, 1989, and was completed—with deliveries—during Stroock's early months in office. It was followed by at least seventy-four other arms deals under Stroock (companies including Springfield Armory, Beretta and twenty others), according to internal records from the Office of Defense Trade Controls. The initial Kaibil training, in the late 1980s, caused embarrassment when it became news. After that, according to G-2 Maj. José Fernando Paiz Prem and other officers, it continued secretly, under Stroock and others.

Some of these lines of support are proffered by the C.I.A., others by the Pentagon and the State Department. But all are broadly supervised by the ambassador on the scene. As Stroock himself described it in a January 29, 1990, letter, he was "directly responsible for the supervision and coordination of all United States government personnel and activities in Guatemala." As such, he supervised the C.I.A. station chief, and, according to three of his intelligence colleagues, had access to the asset list. Indeed, the acting C.I.A. director, William Studeman, testified to the Senate intelligence committee on April 4 that in Guatemala, as normally, "the chiefs of station coordinate extensively with the Ambassador. . . . The Ambassador is authorized to know all that the chief of station knows." Furthermore, Stroock admitted to the *Star Tribune* that he "knew that covert American [C.I.A.] payments continued to the Guatemalan military" after the murder of Michael DeVine and the purported December 1990 "cutoff" of military aid. (This admission, plus Stroock's *Star Tribune* statement that the C.I.A. payments were authorized by an official finding by his personal friend President Bush, puts the lie to the familiar foolish claims that Guatemala policy was being made by C.I.A. renegades.)

When it comes to dealing with the individual victims of its paid killers, the United States has a generally sordid record (although U.S. victims do, as required, sometimes get assistance from the embassy). Stroock continued that tradition while adding his own special twists. Even after being given doctors' reports showing that Sister Dianna Ortiz (a U.S. citizen) had been tortured, Stroock's embassy issued a press guidance on March 19, 1990, saying it had "not formed any conclusions" as to whether she had "staged her own kidnapping." Stroock should be grateful I did not quote more of his letter to Ortiz's lawyer. In it he tried to bully her and her representatives into silence regarding her belief that a North American linked to the embassy was involved in the crime (writing that such assertions were "an offense against the Eighth Commandment"), and even managed to accuse the nuns who were protecting the just gang-raped and mutilated Ortiz of "indifference to the fate of those undergoing torture." Ortiz says that she was taken aback that after all that had happened to her "here was the U.S. Ambassador making an attack on me."

Father Joseph Nangle was among a delegation to the embassy that heard Lewis Amselem say, in Stroock's presence, that he was "tired of these lesbian nuns coming down" to Guatemala. Amselem told a U.S. Congressional aide and Guatemala's Interior Minister (who told ABC News that he had got the story from the "American Embassy") that Ortiz had not really been kidnapped but instead had snuck out for lesbian sex. Indeed, Gen. Héctor Gramajo Morales told *La Republica* on April 17 that Stroock himself had "assured" him that Ortiz was "well" and that she had not been abducted and tortured but simply "had problems with her nerves."

Similarly, after Meredith Larson was stabbed in an evident political attack (her Peace Brigades office had been receiving threats and had been bombed with hand grenades), Stroock told a U.S. delegation that the attack—as Jean Abbott, the delegation leader, recalls it—"was not political, just a street crime of passion, of Latin men getting excited over North American women."

It is macabre, and emblematic, that Stroock attended Myrna Mack's funeral. The man the Mack family charges as the author of the crime, Gen. Edgar Godoy Gaitán, was a C.I.A. asset, paid by the embassy.

Ambassador Stroock is quite correct when he says that U.S. support for the Guatemalan Army has been approved by Congress and all sectors of the government. What this means is that if and when there are Nuremberg-style tribunals on Guatemala, many high-level U.S. officials of both parties should be in the dock. In the meantime, Stroock and other U.S. officials who have worked on Guatemala can facilitate the search for justice by granting a waiver under the Privacy Act to allow release by the C.I.A. and other agencies of all documents relating to the Guatemalan Army that include their names. *Allan Nairn*

### CLARIFICATION

The last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of Robert I. Friedman's "One Man's *Jihad*" [May 15] should have said, "Carmon was an adviser on Emerson's documentary." We regret the editorial error.

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